

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH    October 11, 2011**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## **MINUTES**

**The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee held a meeting on this date at 6:00 p.m. in the Jr. – Sr. High School Library. Members present were Gregory Coutcher, Chairman; Teri Maia-Cicero, Vice-Chairwoman; Valerie Zuercher, Clerk; Mark Rafanelli, Theresa Donovan, Paul McFadden, and Claudine Pande. Others present: Superintendent Thomas J. Geismar, Director of Administration Robert V. Ross, Attorney Vincent Ragosta (arrived at 6:30 p.m.)**

**ORDER – Chair Coutcher called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and Clerk Zuercher read the District Mission Statement.**

**Open Forum – None**

**ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA- Superintendent Geismar gave an overview of the Consent Agenda.**

**Mr. Ross answered Member McFadden's inquiry regarding Bills.**

**Member Donovan moved to accept the consent agenda; seconded by**

**Member Rafanelli; and voted 7 – 0 in favor.**

**The following items were approved:**

**A. Approval of Minutes - Regular Minutes of September 27, 2011**

**B. Personnel Items**

**1. Appointments**

**2. Leaves of Absence**

**3. Resignations**

**4. Grievances**

**5. Non-Renewals**

**6. Recalls**

**7. Sabbaticals**

**C. Bills – In the amount of \$ 61,199.01**

**D. Home School Approval**

**Six (6) Students**

**End Consent Agenda**

**Correspondence – (1) WB Community Health and The Trust joint RFP**

**Budget Update 2011 – 2012 – Mr. Ross pointed out that he included the budget update in his monthly status report. He reported that spending levels continue to be held to 65% of budget on supplies, materials, and equipment and he gave a brief account of the**

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dialogue that took place at a recent RIASBO/RISSA meeting surrounding the funding formula.

**Monthly Status Reports – Superintendent – Member Pande asked if EWG could**

**look at districts that received good NECAP science scores to see what they are using. For example, Westerly achieved 80% proficient at the elementary level. Dr. Geismar said that Westerly is also using Gems-Net. Gems-Net recently visited Wawaloam School and will be visiting Metcalf School. He told the committee that he plans to bring an item to a future meeting agenda to talk about science. He gave a brief overview of the current elementary science curriculum that is being taught every day. Plans are in place to visit a school in Chariho that is doing well. Gems-Net will analyze EWG data and then provide feedback at a meeting scheduled for October 25 at Gems-Net.**

**Business – Mr. Ross answered Member Pande's questions regarding Technology. He reported that the classroom laptops are imaged and the document cameras are in. The wireless rollout should be done by the end of this week or the beginning of next week.**

**Technology/Maintenance – Member Donovan referenced the Technology and Facilities reports and noted that both directors are citing challenges. She wants both directors to know that their concerns are not being ignored. She encouraged them to come to the**

**School Committee if they wish to address their concerns in more detail. The School Committee wants to work with them to help resolve their issues.**

**Special Education – Member Pande expressed her opinion that Special Education is doing a fabulous job at the Early Learning Center. The newsletter is fabulous and it looks like they are doing a great job.**

**NEW BUSINESS – Approve FFA Field Trip Proposal – Chairman Coutcher advised that this item would be delayed until the presenter arrives.**

**Approve Sr. High Ski Club Field Trip Proposal – Dr. Geismar said that the ski trip proposal might need to be tabled since Mr. Massed who is coordinating the trip is not present. Principal Butler offered to represent Mr. Massed. Clerk Zuercher voiced concern that postponement would conflict with important deadlines that need to be met.**

**Clerk Zuercher moved to approve the Ski Club field trip; seconded by Member Rafanelli; and voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.**

**Approve Consultant for CRP – Dr. Geismar reminded members that last year the School Committee approved hiring consultant Sylvia Blanda to write the Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP) and said that**

she did a fabulous job. He requested School Committee approval to hire a consultant to write the 2012 – 2013 CRP. The position will

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need to be posted. Afterward, a recommended candidate will be brought to the School Committee for approval.

Member Pande moved to approve hiring a consultant to write the CRP for \$6,000; seconded by Vice Chair Cicero; and voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion carried.

Approve 2012 – 2013 Budget Development Timeline – Member Pande said that she would not be opposed to scheduling additional Budget Workshop(s) rather than including them on the regular meeting agenda so that regular meetings are not so lengthy. Clerk Zuercher asked and Mr. Ross confirmed that copies of the approved timeline would be sent to both Town Councils. Chairman Coutcher said he believes that the date to submit an amendment to the School Committee budget needs to change. Last year the School Committee extended that date to one week beyond the date of adoption to give people more time to submit amendments. If the budget adoption date stays at March 13 and a one-week extension is given, that would leave three weeks to get the ballots ready. The School Committee came to a consensus that this item will continue to the next regular

meeting agenda. Mr. Ross will bring the timeline back with mark ups of the lag times for critical dates that must be considered.

**Approve 2012 School Committee Meeting Dates – Clerk Zuercher moved to approve the 2012 School Committee Meeting Dates; seconded by Member Pande; and voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.**

**Approve Request for .5 FTE Purchasing Clerk and Restructuring of 1.0 FTE Central Office Support – Dr. Geismar and Mr. Ross spoke on behalf of Mr. Ross' proposal to hire a .5 FTE Purchasing Clerk and restructure the current 1.0 FTE Central Office support position. Dr. Geismar said that there is ample justification for at least this year for this position in the areas to support technology and facilities. The proposed position would cost approximately \$32,121 with benefits, which could be financed through the general fund balance. The position will be reviewed annually. Currently a .25 FTE Executive Assistant supports the Director of Administration. The remainder of the secretary's time is spent working for purchasing, curriculum, and as Special Education support.**

**A spirited debate ensued with Member McFadden inquiring whether the position was a permanent or temporary position. Mr. Ross responded to fill the position for the rest of the year would be more than a temporary position. However, the position will be reviewed annually as part of the budget process. Vice Chair Cicero questioned**

the timing of the requests. Mr. Ross said that the position is to be reviewed during the next budget cycle but the undeniable truth is that the district has eliminated 2.5 Central Office Administrators and one IT Supervisor but their work has not gone away. In order to sustain the work being done and to accomplish the work to be done for upcoming vital events, the support is needed. Member Pande noted the document presented by Mr. Ross

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speaks for itself and for both Dr. Geismar and Mr. Ross to bring this to the committee, shows there is a need and that they believe the district can afford to do this. Still, there was hesitation that with a difficult budget coming up cuts might have to be made, so how would things move forward with the position. Mr. Ross recognized that once the budget cycle begins, every position is up for justification. Member Rafanelli voiced opinion that although the committee has an obligation to hold spending and to explain to the towns, it also has an obligation to make sure that the district runs efficiently. The district cannot run efficiently without support. While supporting the position, it must be clear this is a temporary situation and will be looked at again and reevaluated. Member Donovan inquired about the reporting structure relative to the District Treasurer and the Treasurer's Assistants. Mr. Ross responded with an overview of the duties performed by each, and the workflow associated with those duties. Chair Coutcher said that since he has been on the School Committee,

**Mr. Ross has come to the board to ask for help but he has never asked with the way the budget is now. He said that he thinks Mr. Ross is truly up against the wall because this is the worst time to ask. Just that fact shows it is needed. He said that he is in favor of the proposal. Obviously, this will need to be reviewed every year but realistically the position may need to remain in place. He pointed out that the district does not have many administrators. EWG does not have a Human Resource Director or an Assistant Superintendent like most other districts have.**

**Member McFadden moved to approve the request; seconded by Member Rafanelli; and voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.**

**Chair Coutcher returned to item, V. A. NEW BUSINESS – Approve FFA Field Trip Proposal – FFA Advisor David Lewis presented his proposal for three FFA students to attend the National Future Farmer Association (FFA) Convention. Mr. Lewis said that their respective parents would accompany the three students to Indianapolis. He hopes to bring the students back to a future meeting to share their experiences and photographs with the School Committee.**

**Vice Chair Cicero moved to approve the FFA field trip to Indianapolis; seconded by Member Pande; and voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Student Information System Update – Dr.**

**Geismar reported that the parent portal IDs and passwords have been sent home so that parents can access the parent portal. Aspen is up and running.**

**Capital Project Update – Dr. Geismar reported that Metcalf’s new water system is up and running. Architect Luis Torrado is in the process of getting closeout documents from Gilbane Building Company. The Building Committee will be meeting soon. The security hardware is 95% complete and the software installation is pending.**

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**Mr. Ross added that the security project is on budget and IT has ironed out the software component. Now the question is about the security policy. Member McFadden requested to bring the policy discussion back for School Committee inquiry/input.**

**Reports/Comments – None**

**Important Dates and Meetings – Wednesday, October 12, 2011-Building Committee Meeting; Wednesday, October 19, 2011-Building Committee Meeting; Tuesday, October 25, 2011-School Committee Meeting; Wednesday, October 26, 2011-Building Committee Meeting; Wednesday, November 2, 2011-Building**

**Committee Meeting; Tuesday, November 8, 2011-School Committee Meeting; Wednesday, November 9, 2011-Building Committee Meeting; Wednesday, November 16, 2011-Building Committee Meeting; Tuesday, November 22, 2011-School Committee Meeting; Wednesday, November 23, 2011-Building Committee Meeting; Wednesday, November 30, 2011-Building Committee Meeting**

**Clerk Zuercher moved to go into Executive Session at 7:32 p.m. in accordance with 42-46-5 (a)(4) – Discussion of Investigative Proceedings Regarding Allegations of Employee Misconduct; seconded by Member Rafanelli; and voted as follows:**

**Gregory Coutcher Yes**

**Teri Cicero Yes**

**Valerie Zuercher Yes**

**Mark Rafanelli Yes**

**Theresa Donovan Yes**

**Paul McFadden Yes**

**Claudine Pande Yes**

**Meeting recessed to Executive Session at 7:35 p.m.**

**Clerk Zuercher moved to reconvene to Open Session. Member Rafanelli seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor.**

**Meeting reconvened to Open Session at 8:25 p.m.**

**There were no votes taken during Executive Session.**

**Adjournment – Vice Chair Cicero moved to adjourn; Member Donovan seconded the motion; and voted 7 – 0 in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.**

**ROBIN CERIO**

**CLERK**